

Dustin Monroe/
Chairman and Committee Members,

I come in Opposition against Senate Bill 374, because of the negative effects it will have on Public Education in Montana

Charter schools are the latest scheme to privatize public education in the U.S and this bill will do exactly that. The bill is asking to take away an average of \$115, 000 for four years away from Public Education and the State of Montana. The funding would have to come from the general fund.

Also Assumption States

10. Because there is no way to estimate the number of charter schools that may be established, it is not possible to reasonably determine what the total fiscal impact to the DOA or the local governments might be. So this Charge could be way greater than the assumed cost but the state of Montana would have to cover this.

12. SB 374 allows public charter schools to be exempt from school accreditation standards, other administrative rules, and Title 20, MCA.

In addition, charter schools often further segregation. A 2009 study by the UCLA Civil Rights Project showed that "charter schools are more racially isolated than traditional public schools in virtually every state and large metropolitan area in the nation."

This is the part that bothers me the most for low income and Minority Students, will they be given the same opportunity or will the cost factor drive them out. What will be taught, Will Indian Education for all be taught and how?

I see in Assumption 17 by the Department of Revenue that this bill creates nonprofit organizations but most charter schools act more like Corporations in generating capital fees and boards take the control away from the parents.

Having another body created in already under funded state agency would only hurt our kids not help them in our state. We need to focus on improving what we have and investing money in current system not making it more complicated. Charter schools only benefit a rural Montana but would be mainly in the Urban Centers, so why would we make an investment, when Charter schools would not benefit all.

Please table Senate Bill 374; it's the right thing and the right investment.